(d) whether conversion of all the rail tracks under N.F. Railway to broad gauge line would be completed during Eleventh Plan; and

(e) what is the present progress of Lumding-Badarpur railway gauge conversion work under N.F. Railways?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) Bogibeel rail-cum-road bridge over river Brahmaputra in Assam has been declared as a National Project. Tender for collection of boulders for protection works, earthwork for embankments, bridges and station buildings for link lines etc. have been awarded and works taken up. Tender for main bridge is under process. The project is targeted for completion by 2011-12 subject to availability of resources.

(b) Prima facie, there is no need for having another rail bridge at Saraighat from traffic considerations. However, survey for second rail bridge at Saraighat has been taken up.

(c) With the completion of Rangia-Murkongselek gauge conversion alongwith rail-cum-road bridge at Bogibeel, two broad gauge tracks between Bongaigaon and Tinsukia will become available. Both these projects are targeted for completion by the end of Eleventh Plan subject to availability of resources.

(d) All efforts will be made to convert the majority of the meter gauge lines to broad gauge during the 11th Five Year Plan.

(e) On Lumding-Badarpur section, 369 lac cum out of 460 lac cum earthwork, 9 out of 73 major bridges, 252 out of 316 minor bridges, 2649 m out of 16764 m tunneling and 18354 cum out of 490000 cum ballast collection have been completed.

New programmes to facilitate pilgrims on the Buddhist circuit

1306. KUMARI NIRMALA DESHPANDE: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether new programmes are being taken up by the Railways to facilitate the pilgrims on the Buddhist circuit;

(b) if so, the details of the programmes; and

(c) if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) and (b) In order to facilitate the pilgrims on Buddhist circuit, a special train called Mahaparinivran Express was introduced during the year by Indian Railways Catering & Tourism Corporation (IRCTC), a public sector undertaking under the Ministry of Railways, with an all inclusive package of rail travel, road travel, accommodation, sight-seeing, onboard/ off board meals etc. The one week intinerary includes major Buddhist destinatioins like Gaya, Bodhgaya, Rajgir, Nalanda, Varanasi, Sarnath, Kushinagar, Lumbini, Sravasti etc.

(c) Does not arise.

Trivandrum Rajdhani Express

1307. MS. MABEL REBELLO: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether New Delhi-Trivandrum route has the heavy rush of passengers;

(b) the reasons why the Trivandrum Rajdhani Express Train is just a bi-weekly train;

(c) what is the volume of passengers on the New Delhi/Nizamuddin Trivandrum route;

(d) whether Government proposes to make Trivandrum Rajdhani Express train daily to meet the heavy rush of traffic on this route; and

(e) if so, by when Government proposes to increase the frequency and if not, the reasons therefor?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) The traffic between New Delhi-Thiruvananthapuram route varies from time to time. During peak rush period the demand outstrips the availability whereas during lean period accommodation is generally adequate.

(b) Due to operational and resource constraints.

(c) During April' 2007 to October' 2007 on an average 4179 passengers were booked per day on the New Delhi/Nizamuddin Thiruvananthapuram route.

(d) No, Sir.

(e) Does not arise.

Gauge conversion of Sakari-Jhanjharpur-Laukha rail line

†1308. SHRI MANGANI LAL MANDAL: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that the work related to gauge conversion from narrow (meter) gauge to broad gauge rail line situated at Sakari to Jhanjharpur and Jhanjharpur to Laukha under Samastipur rail division of East Central Railway, Hajipur has not been taken up, so far; and

(b) if so, by when the work of gauge conversion from the above two narrow (meter) rail sections into broad rail track would be taken up and the complete details thereof?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RAILWAYS (SHRI R. VELU): (a) No, Sir. The work on the Sakari-Laukaha Bazar-Nirmali & Saharsa - Forbesganj Gauge Conversion project has been taken up.

(b) Does not arise.

Travelling facilities to candidates of postponed recruitment test

1309. SHRI VARINDER SINGH BAJWA: Will the Minister of RAILWAYS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a recruitment test which was to be held recently at Patna has been postponed;

† Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.